

**CBC and Santa Ana Watershed Group Meeting  
Ontario DoubleTree Inn  
January 10, 2002**

**CBC Members Present**

Mary Nichols, California Resources Agency  
Steve Bennett, Southern California Association of County Supervisors  
Bryan Chesney, National Marine Fisheries Service  
Tony Danna, Bureau of Land Management  
J.R. Flores, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Alex Glazer, University of California  
Jerry Harmon, San Diego Association of Governments  
Chris Hass, US Geological Survey Western Ecological Research Center  
John Hofmann, Regional Council of Rural Counties  
Beth Jines, CalEPA  
Mary Miller, Department of Water Resources  
Chris Nota, USDA Forest Service  
Jose Phillips, California Conservation Corps  
Rick Rayburn, California State Parks  
Chuck Raysbrook, Department of Fish and Game  
Jim Shevock, National Park Service  
Mike Shulters, US Geological Survey  
Darryl Young, Department of Conservation  
Colonel Anthony Wendell, US Marine Corps  
Al Wright, Wildlife Conservation Board

**Council Meeting – (8:30 – 9:30)**

**Secretary Nichols:** The helicopter overview of trip yesterday gave a good overview of the watershed and it's many challenges.

**Council Announcements**

**Chris Nota, CBC Executive Committee Chair**

Ms. Nota thanked everyone for the field trip. The next Executive Committee meeting will be 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm, Jan. 31 in the Resources Agency conference room. Ventura County Supervisor Steve Bennett will replace Jerry Harmon on the Executive Committee. March 13-14 is next CBC meeting in Yuma with the Southwest Strategy and will focus on getting acquainted and lessons learned from collaboration. Staff is trying to organize this in ways that considers funding limitations of the Council. The preliminary schedule for 2002 meetings is in preparation and will be available soon. The summer meeting will likely be in late August.

**Maria Rea, Assistant Secretary, Resources Agency**

The Council's Watershed Work Group (<http://ceres.ca.gov/biodiv/wwwg.html>) is multi-agency, multi-interest group that is working to coordinate funding practices and other activities related to watershed management. The group met last in conjunction with the Modesto CBC meeting. It was a joint meeting with CALFED staff to begin discussions of coordination with them. Maria complimented the

Santa Ana River Watershed Group for their insightful and progressive approach to coordination at the watershed scale. She complimented the watershed group for developing a coordinated vision for the watershed. Maria then summarized the preliminary findings from a draft report to the Legislature on ways for the state to assist watershed governance at the local level. The study was based on an assessment of 10 watershed groups. Key findings included:

1. Watershed management is viable and desirable;
2. Many uncoordinated State programs are in place;
3. The State needs assurances that investments in partnerships will work;
4. Funding for local capacity building and monitoring is lacking; and
5. Better understanding of keys to success and obstacles is needed.

Recommendations from the report are: formal policies for state support are needed; standardized principles are needed; local government involvement is key; State should develop a strategic plan for watershed management in 2002; group development takes time and a minimum planning horizon of five years is needed; and state agencies should modify their programs to more closely link with community-based watershed programs.

**Alex Glazer, Natural Reserve System Director, University of California**

UC is interested in applying for a Cooperative Ecosystem Study Unit (CESU) through grants from the federal agencies including many CBC member agencies like the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, USDA Forest Service, US Geological Survey, and the US Bureau of Reclamation. The Department of Energy is also a participating federal agency. This would be a formal research partnership between land-management agencies and UC. At least six campuses would be involved. Target date is 2003. More information is available on the CESU website at [www.cesu.org/cesu/](http://www.cesu.org/cesu/).

**Mike Shulters, District Chief, Water Resources, USGS.**

USGS has been studying water quality in the Santa Ana Basin. A handout was provided that summarized the National Water Quality Assessment program in the Santa Ana Basin.

**Chris Nota**

Jack Blackwell is now in California and will be at the Yuma meeting in March representing the USDA Forest Service and replacing Bradley E. Powell.

**Jerry Harmon, SANDAG**

The Environmental Impact Report for the northern part of San Diego County HCP is done and available on the SANDAG website:

[http://www.sandag.org/whats\\_new/](http://www.sandag.org/whats_new/) or by downloading the .pdf file directly, here: [http://www.sandag.org/whats\\_new/publications/environmental/mhcp\\_eir\\_toc.pdf](http://www.sandag.org/whats_new/publications/environmental/mhcp_eir_toc.pdf).

## **Joint Meeting with the Santa Ana Watershed Group**

### **Welcome and Overview – Jerry A. King (Santa Ana Watershed Group)**

Mr. King presented the fly-over video that was presented on Wednesday. The first view is GIS-based. The second is a photo-tour from a helicopter. Described growth

projections and challenges of environmental protection in the most rapidly urbanizing area in the county. Reviewed the new partnership among governments, the dairy industry, environmental interests and others to develop and implement a comprehensive water management program for the basin.

## **Session 1 - Water Quality, Supply, Reclamation, and Conjunctive Use**

### **Joe Grindstaff, Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA)**

Mr. Grindstaff provided an overview of an integrated watershed plan for the Santa Ana River. Fifteen agencies are heavily involved. The goals for the integrated watershed plan include providing a reliable water supply in times of drought and decreasing demand with an increasing population. The program elements include:

- Groundwater cleanup (largely salt removal);
- Store enough water to provide a reliable supply during drought;
- Make better use of storm and flood waters;
- Integrate water and land management consistent with the demand for open space, and recreation;
- Conserve biodiversity; provide maximum opportunities for water recycling.

### **Richard Atwater, Inland Empire Utilities Agency**

Mr. Atwater discussed the Chino Basin Storage and Recovery Program. The Chino basin is the area around Ontario. Seventy percent of the water supply comes from the upper watershed in the San Bernardino Mountains. It is about 220 square miles and yields about 140,000 acre-feet. Projected demand is about 400,000 acre-feet in 2020. Groundwater will be an important source and it currently has serious degradation at the lower end of the groundwater aquifer. The overall strategy is to store underground during wet and normal years for use in drought years, and recycle for maximum use. Current storage capacity of the groundwater aquifer is 500,000 acre-feet. Capacity is projected to be 700,000 to 1 million acre-feet. Storage techniques are “in lieu” practices and direct/passive injection.

### **Blake Anderson, Orange County Sanitation District**

Mr. Anderson described what he called “unconventional approaches to conventional problems”. Three examples were given. First, degraded water surface and groundwater quality was addressed with a regional interceptor sewer - the Santa Ana River Interceptor (SARI) line that carries waste (largely salts) from water quality improvement facilities to the ocean. The line follows the river channel and is now exposed due to erosion of the surface material. Studies are under way to find economical ways of protecting the line. A limited overall water supply is a second problem that was addressed by a large-scale ground-water- reclamation program.

The reclaimed water has many uses including irrigation, protection from salt water intrusion, domestic use, and injection for storage in the groundwater aquifer. Development of the infrastructure to distribute reclaimed water is pending state and federal funds. Urban run-off is the third conventional problem. This problem is being approached by diverting the run-off to treatment facilities for clean up and subsequent disposal in the ocean. A remaining issue with urban run off is finding equitable ways to distribute the responsibilities and costs for clean up.

An open discussion with the Council followed which brought out the extreme value of water in southern California and the strong commitment among many government and private interests to collaborative solutions. Many of the local program participants expressed the critical importance of support by state and federal agencies for locally developed solutions to difficult natural resource issues.

## **Session 2 - Shared Governance in the Santa Ana River Watershed**

*Before this session began, Mary Nichols provided an update on Prop 40 (Water Bond). The California Legislature adopted legislation in 2001 authorizing the \$2.6 billion bond measure to be on the March ballot. Most of Props 12 and 13 have already been spent. New revenues are needed and Prop 40 would provide a useful source for water improvement projects. Money would be appropriated in ways that can bring the most good for the investment as well as focusing on projects that are ready to begin on-the-ground work. Therefore, the Santa Ana River project is in a good position to receive a portion of new money. Public opinion polls suggest there is good voter support for this measure.*

Lindell Marsh introduced the speakers and the topics for the session. He then discussed the concept of “shared governance” which he offered as a coop alternative to the “head-to-head” approach to management and conflict resolution. Mr. Marsh related shared governance to the concept of community by noting that shared governance departs from the “who wins” approach to one of “how can people be innovative together in ways that benefits all”. (Note: As the program developed in the afternoon, it was clear that people are working towards cooperation and, to some degree collaboration, rather than true shared governance.)

In the Santa Ana watershed, the core group is the Santa Ana Watershed Group. The key agencies with primary responsibilities for water management are the principle conveners. Other agencies that have water-related duties are also involved in the watershed group. A roundtable brings in the public and others. All of the key agencies are signatories to an MOU that identifies a vision and work plan for the watershed.

### **Jerry Blum, City of Ontario, Department of Planning**

Mr. Blum described the management of the 50 square mile agriculture preserve in Ontario. First, Riverside County established the agriculture preserve in 1993. Five years later in 1998, the Board decided that infill of the agricultural preserve with the New Model Colony was desirable and another of 102,000 people could be accommodated. A land conservancy will be created to handle mitigation funding and acquire new lands in other areas. Dairies are expected to relocate in other areas. Restoration of local watersheds, drainages and habitats will also occur through development fees on new residents. Plans for open space and species conservation will be coordinated with other counties and communities.

### **Larry Paul, Orange County, Water and Coastal Resources Manager**

Mr. Paul discussed a partnership among Orange County, local agencies, and the Corps of Engineers to identify and plan for problems and issues in the County. Resource and regulatory agencies were invited too and many participated. The assessment phase is now under way.

**Richard Lashbrook, Riverside County, Transportation and Land Management Director**

Mr. Lashbrook described the Riverside County Integrated Project. He stated that, if it were a state, the Inland Empire would be the fourth fastest growing state in the nation. The job in Riverside County is providing for growth in ways that provide affordable housing, jobs, infrastructure and environmental protection. The driving force for bringing collaboration was the need for infrastructure support (largely transportation). The projected transportation system was displayed. A new process was used for planning future infrastructure developments. The process provided broad public involvement throughout the planning process and environmental protection was given the highest priority. All of the key state and fed agencies were involved. Over 100 interests are involved. Financing of all work is an integrated and coop effort.

**Peter Dangermond, Dangermond Associates**

Mr. Dangermond described work by the Riverside Land Conservancy to help the county implement strategies for open space, recreation, and habitat conservation in the Santa Ana watershed. He noted that, since the Santa Ana River divides Riverside and San Bernardino counties, it was never a restoration priority for either county. New cooperative conservation planning in the regional has brought attention to the river. Mr. Dangermond stressed the importance of partnerships for developing and implementing conservation strategies that have firm funding and staff. Conservancies can assist these efforts by accepting or seeking donations of funds and land.

Secretary Nichols closed the session by stating that the coordinated work in the Santa Ana watershed is very impressive and make a good model for many other areas in the state. The meeting adjourned at 3:20.

*Notes by Mike Chapel  
01/10/02*